

The Court of the Mogho Naba. Tribute and Payments Due.
Obligations of Mossi Subjects to their Naba.

Morning Honors Paid to the Emperor of the Mossi

644 The council of the emperor of the Mossi is held every morning in front of an antechamber called zango which opens out upon a very large courtyard.

821 The Mossi have for a long time regarded the sun as a "god."
776 Wend'pous yan, "God shows himself," refers to the rising of
643 the sun, but it is used in a figurative sense to refer to the emergence of the Mogho Naba. This illustrates the regard held by the Mossi people for their chief since he is compared to the star of daylight and thus to a "god."

643 The Mogho Naba appears each morning dressed in an ample
292 red robe and with a red gourmousga (a kind of burnoose) folded and thrown over his shoulders. On his head he wears a cap, a fez, topped with a wazourfou sebré (literally, "silver paper" [streamers], that is to say, silver amulet). Red represents the light that comes
[822] with the appearance of the sun, while the silver on the cap represents the brilliance of the star itself.

644 Before the time set for the start of the ceremony, the three
sogon'kassemé (great servitors) bring into the courtyard the [58] cushion, nagpouré, and all the other insignia of office. As soon as
[201] the Mogho Naba appears, they arise and make a snapping sound with thumb and index finger to indicate that the naba is coming.

• [533] "Wend'pous yan" is also cried out by the gagando and luinsé (drummers) as soon as His Majesty sits down. The Bend'Naba [chief drummer] is the only one who does not beat his drum; instead, he rubs his finger back and forth over the waxed part of the drum head to imitate the roar of the lion. Four or five young men bearing loaded rifles take their places in front of the emperor.

Honors are rendered to the Mogho Naba in the following order.

1. The Samandé Naba, Baloum Naba, Wedranga Naba, and Simandé Nabila, as well as the Zusoabin'kassanga (chief eunuch and guardian of the emperor's household), are the first to greet His Majesty and to inquire about his health.

644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larraïé Naba, the Kam-saogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of [788] benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

• [533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their [273] homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

653 Naba, and Baloum Naba) do the same thing. (We have seen in an earlier chapter, under "Payments to the Mogho Naba" that the millet brought by the ministers and vassals makes up the food supply for the emperor and his wives; the harvest from his own fields is used to feed foreigners and to make beer for the basgha.)

• 533 In order to arouse the young men to greater efforts, drummers accompany them, playing "pang'rog'kamga, kamba komsomba" (these young men were born of strength; they are worthy of their parents). "

Loads of millet are presented to the emperor during his first audience (wend'pous yan), after the ministers have paid their respects. The Soré Naba (literally, "chief of the path"), taking his place before the Mogho Naba, but with his back to him, orders the young men by the sound of drums to finish clearing the roads of the naba up to the king's courtyard. Since the work was virtually completed, this is a mere formality.

The ministers' followers and the bearers who brought in the millet, equipped with axes, daba, and even sticks, pretend to work energetically. They gesticulate, cry out, and [155] sing. The Soré Naba then goes under a shelter reserved for him, and the young men join him there.

796 The Ouidi Naba, the Larhallé Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the
769 Kamsaoug' Naba salute the emperor, and it is only then that the latter sets the date for the celebration of his basgha.

Once the date is set, the bodyguards of the Mogho Nabo (samand' kamba), whose chiefs are Samandé and Rakogdo, are ordered to start at once to repairing the shelters in the courtyard where the daily audiences are held.

Sleeping away from home. Three days before the Feast of the Dead and as soon as he has given his pugtiéma (first wife) the sprouted millet for making dam (beer), the Mogho Naba becomes uneasy. This is because the kimsé (manes of his ancestors) are present in the house. He must find more peaceful lodgings.

On Wednesday evening, therefore, he goes to the home of the Samand'Naba of Kamsaoghin. He spends the night there, but at cockcrow the following morning he returns to his home where he spends the day. That night he goes to Gounghin and spends the night in a house near the home of the Gounga Naba, his third minister.

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
 769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the
 Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new
 year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him
 to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his
 predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from
 home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts.
 The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him
 the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house
 of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following
 four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba,
 chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch
 and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the
 Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
 769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
 782 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any
 event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the
 ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization
 since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much
 to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

796 Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
 769 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
 533 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers
 are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouf (rice), dam (millet beer),
 and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
 769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
 [554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the
 order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and
 other followers of the ministers.

[576] About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say
wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then
 they return home.

769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard un-
 533 til the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf
 of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In
 the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accom-
 panied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet
b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the oc-
 casion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and
 orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba
nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his
 gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to
 come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give
 a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend'
 Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with
 flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it
 about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk
 upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to
 his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba,
 accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over.
 [431] On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and
 the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and
 livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone
 chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard
 for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older
 men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
 644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

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595 Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).

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595 He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

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595 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
● 533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

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562 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

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431 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

364 sections and especially around the market. Now formal regulations require the inhabitants [232] to dig latrine ditches in the compounds, but it will be a long time before the native loses the habit of relieving himself in the open air.

Chapter 15

Mossi Dances and their Significance (1)

1. An excerpt, revised and completed, from a lecture delivered by the author on December 24, 1926.

535 In this chapter, we shall describe the Mossi dances, explain their meaning, and tell of the old beliefs with which they are connected.

Indeed, these dances occupy a place apart in the general category of dances of indigenous peoples.

The latter, for the most part and notably among the Boussancé and the Gourma [Gurma], are only exuberant displays, sometimes exercises in suppleness, sometimes caricatures of the motions of love.

The Mossi dances, on the other hand, are actually performed in accordance with fixed rules. There are three types: 1) dances which we shall call sentimental, known as wennega; 2) dances that are part war dance and part religious, called waongo; and finally 3) funeral dances known as warba.

535 In order of precedence, let us begin with the love dance
 533 called wennega. This is executed at gatherings. The lover and
 832 his sweetheart -- the latter dressed in black, the ceremonial
 color -- are receiving their friends. Beer is flowing, and mouths
 [534] are filled with kola nuts. Soon the musicians strike up [234] their
 rustic guitars (kondé) which are accompanied by the beating of
 gourds. The women sing:

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M' Ba sida talem néré
Talem kan-kaïn, talem ti
Pagh ka zaïd koulogh wa mandé

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"My husband, keep me well,
Keep me in proper fashion,
A woman ages as quickly as gombo [okra]."

In Mossi country, indeed, married women are "kept women."
Other wennega songs include the following:

Kandin bilin koamba ziyob'
Ade kandin bilin koamb' ziyob ya
La Fer-nan dambin yide
Bamb' data pagha piligh' wa rebre y a
Ti prote-mannaie yaoulin pa yaguedin
Koure yanga-yanga karin kouma
f' san katarin kont'me y é
f' san katarin kont'me bif ramodeguema

"Those who work in the circle (subdivision of the circle) (1)

1. In the old days Ouagadougou was
both the headquarters for the Mossi
circle and a subdivision of the circle.

do not know how to chase women. Those in the big circle, the company of the Fernands, are even more ignorant of the art of pleasing. They all want to take off the womens' skirts as though they were unrolling a mat, but they keep their pocketbooks hermetically closed. Wearers of trousers in whose folds hide [235] lice, if you have nothing to give me, at least do not try to take me by force."

F' Nian néré yetta pa nan
logh là
Fola biga ma bé ba
f' ka yi wenin nana y è

"You admire this girl,
Her beauty has won you

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And you do not want to let her go!
Are you perchance this child's mother or father?
You are not the God who created her."

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832 The wennega consists mostly of back-and-forth movements of the hips in slow rhythm. Various figures are performed, but there is always the same rhythm and the same swaying of the hips. The sweetheart herself begins to dance, a curious fact, since women do not usually take part in the men's dances.

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T76 We have noted that another form of Mossi dance is religious, the waongo. The waongo is a mysterious being, half animal, half spirit.

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T76 Origin of the waongo. Tradition has it that this being was one day found all alone on a plain. Those who first saw him took fright and ran away. They went to tell the village elders, who assembled a goodly number of young men, armed [236] with arrows and sticks, to overcome this strange being.

He was not found at the place where he had first been seen. He had moved some distance away. The villagers surrounded him, and the elders, who had brought him a rooster, began to question him: "If he should be taken to the village, would he hurt the villagers? Would he bring misfortune?" The chicken was then sacrificed, but it is told that the sacrifice was not accepted.

The elders returned to the village and brought back a white rooster (norapelga), a he-goat (boéga), and a dog (bâga). Then they addressed the waongo, saying: "We were perhaps mistaken just now. Perhaps you wanted an animal in addition to the rooster we offered to you? If, by becoming our guest, you can bring us happiness, good health, and children, accept these offerings!" They slaughtered the rooster and the goat and killed the dog. This time the sacrifices were accepted.

[532] What the waongo is. The waongo consists of a mask, usually representing the head of an animal, and a bindou (a kind of long cloak made from the bark of the béringa shrub which is soaked in water for a long time to blacken it or from baobab fibers).

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[301] The arms of the soroné are ornamented with two, three, or four copper bracelets, often of alternate yellow and red metal. Sometimes they wear them at the wrists and above the elbow, and occasionally both ankles are adorned with thick bracelets or even with copper gaiters which make walking quite difficult but which are prized very highly.

[201] All these pages wait on the monarch hand and foot. If he coughs, they all rub the palms of their hands together and snap their fingers. This is repeated /18/ even when he drinks, sneezes, or spits. If he rises, the whole court rises, and when he feels those needs common to all mortals, the whole court follows and squats as he does,

644 On important feast days, the naba is followed by music, and every time he makes a gesture, says a word, or takes a step, the musicians
533 play on various kinds of drums. The typical drum peculiar to Mossi
534 country, bindré, which only the members of the drummers' guild are allowed to play, is made of a gourd which may reach 70 or 80 centimeters in diameter. The calabash is emptied, and the side where the stem was attached is removed and replaced with a tightly stretched
533 goat skin. By hitting this skin with his hands, the artist draws many different sounds from his instrument. It is quite an art to play this drum well, and the members of the guild are trained to it from childhood. They are the troubadours, the griot of the country; they sing the praises of chiefs whose genealogies they know by heart, they frequent the markets, they follow the rich and proclaim them to be the bravest, the most generous, the most handsome men this world has ever known, for the sake of a few gifts. They attend all festivities.

534 Another instrument is the lounga, made of a hollowed piece of wood shaped like an hourglass; the two ends are rather broad and joined by a narrow cylinder. This drum is carried under the arm, and its two openings are closed with goat skins joined by cords. The artist stretches these cords more or less tightly by clasping the drum between his arm and the left side of his body, while he hits one of the skins with a small curved stick ending in a little ball and held in his right hand.

The naba's orchestra also includes flutes, from which the natives, especially the Peul, draw pretty but monotonous sounds, and small one-string violins which give forth pleasing tones under a skillful bow.

644 If the Mozo Naba is to ride on horseback, the grooms bring his
492 mount magnificently decked out in a copper headstall and a large embroidered rug which covers its back and rump completely. A piece of embroidered cloth hides the horse's chest, and the Arab-type saddle,

586 It nevertheless happens, though very rarely, that the husband is unable to convince his wife and returns home alone. No one troubles the wife from then on, and her relatives give her full freedom. The grudge of the rejected husband may be persistent, however, and his vengeance frightful. The bride price is not returned; the husband should have known how to keep his wife. It is nevertheless acknowledged that the children born of the union, boys or girls, belong to the father, and he does not fail to claim them when they are grown, or if they run away to their mother.

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467 Negro populations often contain caste groups, set apart from each other by tight barriers. The most outstanding of these are the rules prohibiting marriage between members of the same caste or between those who belong to a caste and those who do not. Such prohibitions do not exist among the Mossi, except in the sense mentioned earlier. Although three caste-like groups exist among them, drummers, smiths, and undertakers, they are castes only in the sense that those who do not belong to such a family cannot exercise the profession. It might be more accurate to call them guilds.

● 533 The drummers (binda) are those who play the bindré, a sort of
[534] large gourd with an aperture about 40 centimeters in diameter and covered with hide. Only those who belong to the drummers' family may play on this drum, which apparently is peculiar to the Mossi, but anyone may play on the other drums. The drummers are present
[782] at all sacrifices offered by the naba; on Friday, the day of sacrifice, they go and pay their respects to him. When sacrifices are offered, they are entitled to the head of the victim. They are present at all
[764] burials, where they play their drum and receive a remuneration which varies with the wealth of the deceased. If it is one of their members who died, they receive neither cowries nor food. They go to war
[727] with their drums. If they are so unfortunate as to be made prisoners, they are never sold but ruthlessly killed; this is done either to prevent them from going back into the fray and stirring the warriors to sack the village, or because no one would want to buy them since they belong to a naba who would retaliate against their captors, or for both reasons at once. The drummers are the country's griot, a term hallowed by custom. They know the genealogy of every naba and sing his praises. Each province chief has a number of drummers and never travels without taking some of them with him. At other times they go to /34/ the market and follow the best-dressed people, singing

● 533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron,
306 extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (kouré). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of

[582] the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the
764 same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

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sented the sun itself. The toilet was performed in complete silence, for no one was allowed to speak to the monarch until after the ceremony. Meanwhile, in the courtyard, the court dignitaries, visitors, and the musicians and minstrels (*bendere*) took their places. The provincial ministers sat on their respective stones (*coganaramse*), and the visitors sat by their hosts. The pages at the door of the zongo awaited the moment when the Mogho Naba and his escort would emerge from the zongo. On seeing the two pages who preceded the monarch, they snapped their fingers as a signal to the still silent *bendere*.

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On seeing the monarch, the chief musician, the Bendere Naba, rubbed his fingers across the top of his drum to produce the sound of a lion's growl, and the other drummers and violinists played the royal air, "Ouend pous yan." The head guard, the Kambo Naba, and his men, carrying guns, walked up from the side and knelt down facing the assembly. And the *samande-kamba*, the "servants of the courtyard," came with heavy batons to guard against crimes of lese majesty. From the wings came a groom with a partly saddled ceremonial horse. As soon as the monarch was seated on his throne, his two pages moved to the front and knelt down facing the courtyard. The salutations now began. The first group of ministers, led by the Baloum Naba and including the Samande Naba, the Samande Nabila, the Ouedrange Naba, the Kamsaogho Naba, and the Zusoaba Kasanga, left their stones and came to the throne with slow steps and bowed heads. A few yards from the monarch, they knelt on the ground, and with their fingers folded and their thumbs in the air, leaned forward, struck the ground with both hands three times, and then rubbed the palms of their left hands with the fingers of their right. Then they arose, and with heads still bowed walked backwards to their places.* With the music still playing, another group of ministers, led by the Ouidi Naba and including such men as the Gounga Naba, the Larhalle Naba, and the Pwe Naba, saluted the ruler in the same manner. On Fridays and other Islamic holy days, the Moslem Imam representing the Ouagadougou congregation read aloud from the Koran. This part of the ceremony ended when the Mogho Naba rose, and, with the measured steps and swaying gait that signified royalty, retired to the zongo, preceded by his two pages.*

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A few minutes later, the monarch returned to the courtyard without his red robe and glittering headdress. There was a second round of salutations comparable to the first, but this time the Ouidi Naba and his group did not appear unless it was an important occasion or important guests were present. When this part of the ceremony was over, the monarch called for his half-saddled horse and announced that he wished to go to

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778 pleted, the remainder of the ceremony followed the pattern of the Ouaga-
634 dougou ritual.

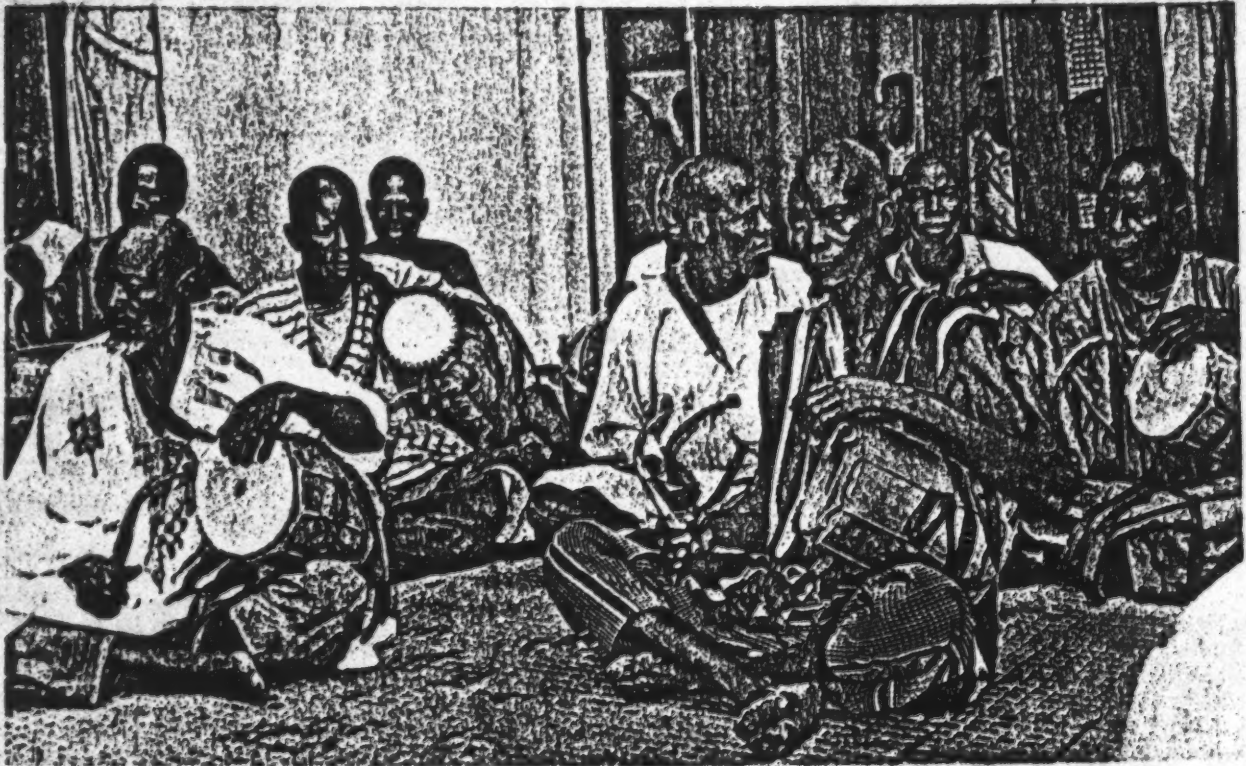
During the weeks that followed, the village chiefs and the heads of the
622 larger lineage segments all offered sacrifices to their ancestors. The Pugh-
613 tiema of each prominent local administrator, chief, or lineage head prepared
769 and poured the millet water as a libation to the ancestors. Whenever pos-
782 sible, each of these personages invited musicians to sing praises to his an-
• 533 cestors. He dressed in his best robe and sat outside his hut to receive pres-
ents from his relatives, friends, and subjects, along with their best wishes
for the new year, and for long life and prosperity. In return he gave them
[182] kola nuts, beer, and food. Thus, in celebrating the Basgha, all the Mossi
were united in prayers and supplications to the ancestors, upon whom rested
the future of their country and the successful reign of the descendants of
Ouedraogo and Oubri.

796 The earth deity, Tenga, held the central place in the second major
182 religio-political ceremony which linked all Mossi. This ritual, called *Tense*
769 (from *tenga*, "earth") and sometimes *Naba Oubri ma koure* ("the anni-
[776] versary of the funeral of Mogho Naba Oubri's mother"), was so important
[648] to Mossi cohesion that it was banned by the French, and as a result its main
[173] features are now unclear. According to tradition, Naba Oubri loved Pough-
toenga, his Ninisi mother, so much, and was so pleased with the elaborate
funeral he gave her, that he decided to repeat this ceremony each year in
the hope that his subjects would be blessed with the bountiful crops and
herds which had made the first one possible. Curiously enough, Oubri's
mother was not a central figure in the *Tense* celebration. Instead, great
stress was placed on the fructifying powers of the earth and on the im-
portance of the royal ancestors in Mossi life. The juxtaposition and associa-
tion of the earth deity with Oubri's mother has important implications for
the Mossi political organization. Mossi tradition holds that a Ninisi woman
was the ancestress of the Mossi of Ouagadougou. Her people probably
[177] celebrated the *Tense* as a fertility rite to their earth goddess, Tenga. The
Mossi apparently took over the ceremony and used it both as a fertility rite
and as a memorial festival, thus symbolically uniting the conquerors and
the conquered.⁹

796 In contrast to the Basgha, no special date appears to have been set for the
769 celebration of the *Tense*. It was held sometime before the crops were
782 sowed, but according to Tauxier it was not celebrated at all in Ouagadougou
[645] when the previous year's harvest had been poor.⁴ Before setting the date
[791] for the festival, the Mogho Naba summoned the Larhalle Naba and ordered
him to have sacrifices made on the graves of all former rulers. This minister

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mosel FA28

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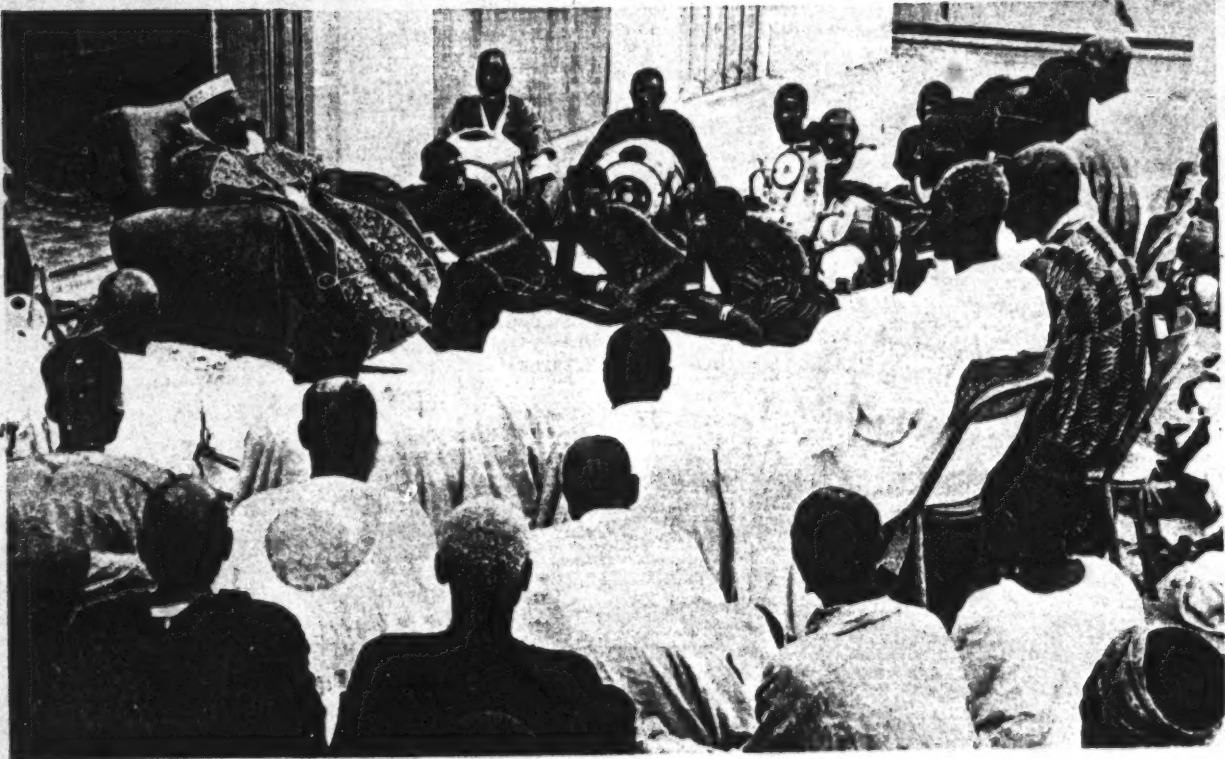


The musicians of the royal court, the Bondere.

[p. 178-c]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

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Mugho Naba Kougri at court. He is flanked on the right by his pages and musicians, and on the left by members of the Moslem community.

[p. 178-E]

9. Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities. 76
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[229]

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema*, and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law (*dakia*) of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening. 766
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The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema*, led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia*, appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia*, carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages 765
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[533]